

Decision

2020-03-20

Doctoral thesis defences and licentiate seminars – recommendations during the ongoing coronavirus outbreak

Travel restrictions and other consequences of the ongoing coronavirus outbreak may (at short notice) affect the ability of external reviewers and members of the Examining Committee to be personally present at doctoral thesis defences and licentiate seminars. Larger public gatherings must be avoided in order to reduce the risk of contagion – a decision which may be further tightened. The Human Science Area would therefore like to clarify what applies to doctoral thesis defences and what measures may be implemented during the current outbreak.

The starting point is that the department itself decides whether the doctoral thesis defence/licentiate seminar should be held completely or partially digitally. Thus, the department does not need to request special permission from the board of Human Science on this issue.

Partially virtual doctoral thesis defences/licentiate seminars

- Any external reviewer, author of a thesis, or members/examiners who are prevented from participating in person may participate via link (preferably Zoom).
- Everyone who participates via link should be able to hear/see everything that is said and which takes place in the doctoral thesis defence room, via both audio and video.
- Those present in the doctoral thesis defence room should be able to hear everyone who is participating via link and, as far as possible, should also be able to see those who attend via link.
- All of the above actors involved in the act of doctoral thesis defence who are participating via link must provide telephone numbers in advance so that there is the possibility of direct telephone contact between the chairperson of the doctoral thesis defence and the person in question, in order to address any technical problems that may arise.
- Substitutes must be available (in person or digitally) to replace regular members at short notice.
- If an external reviewer must be replaced at short notice, one of the external members assumes the role of external reviewer and the substitute steps up as a member of the Examining Committee.
- If a member encounters technical problems with the link during the meeting of the Examining Committee/Panel of Assessors/examiners, she/he may instead participate by telephone.
- At the meeting of the Examining Committee, the external reviewer and supervisor may participate initially, but when it comes time for decisions to be made, they should be disconnected from the meeting.
- For other actors and audiences, audio and video are disconnected as soon as the act of doctoral thesis defence has been completed.
- The department is responsible for arrangements with links.

The Board of Human Science



Completely virtual doctoral thesis defences/licentiate seminars

- Completely virtual doctoral thesis defences/licentiate seminars are also permitted until further notice. The defence must be made public by posting the link to the virtual room on the department's website. It is possible to change to a virtual doctoral thesis defence even after the day on which the date of the doctoral thesis defence is announced.
- The external reviewer and members of the Examining Committee/Panel of Assessors must be able to hear/see the presentation of the author of the thesis, and must be able to participate throughout the public discussion and examination/seminar.
- Substitutes must be available via link to replace regular members at short notice in the event of technical problems.
- The audience/members of the public must be given the opportunity to hear/see the doctoral thesis defence and ask questions via link.
- Any audience/members of the public who are unable to hear/see the doctoral thesis defence via link are asked to contact the Head of Department.
- If the technology fails in such a manner that the above requirements cannot be met, the chairperson shall decide that the doctoral thesis defence/licentiate seminar must be repeated/postponed.
- At the meeting of the Examining Committee, the external reviewer and supervisor may participate initially, but when it is time for decisions to be made, they should be disconnected from the meeting.
- For other actors and audiences, audio and video are disconnected as soon as the act of doctoral thesis defence has been completed.
- The department is responsible for arrangements with links.

Postponement of the doctoral thesis defence/licentiate seminar may be considered even though the basic approach is that activities at Stockholm University should continue as usual, though in adapted forms. A decision to hold a doctoral thesis defence also entails a decision regarding the date on which the act of doctoral thesis defence will take place. This means that a new decision on the date must be made in accordance with the rules of the respective faculty in this area. In the event that the date of the doctoral thesis defence has been changed, please contact Student Services as usual.

Doctoral thesis defence minutes with members participating via link

The person appointed as the chairperson of the Examining Committee makes a handwritten note on page 2 of the minutes under the heading "Present for the taking of the minutes" specifying that a member of the Examining Committee [NAME] has participated digitally and writes her/his initials next to this note. In connection with/directly following the taking of a decision, any member of the



examining Committee/Panel of Assessors who is participating remotely must write an e-mail to the chairperson of the Examining Committee/Panel of Assessors certifying that she/he agrees with the decision of the Examining Committee/Panel of Assessors, or that she/he has reservations regarding the decision. (In the event of a disagreement, there must always be written justification.) The chairperson of the Examining Committee/Panel of Assessors prints out the e-mail and it is appended to the minutes. The chairperson of the Examining Committee/Panel of Assessors/examiners submits the minutes and the annex to the chairperson for the doctoral thesis defence, who then sends them to the main registrar. Copies of the doctoral thesis defence minutes and e-mail printouts are saved at the department.

If it is not possible to print out and sign the minutes in direct connection with the doctoral thesis defence, all members must accredit the chairperson of the doctoral thesis defence via e-mail and clearly certify her/his position on the decision. In such instance, the chairperson of the Examining Committee also indicates that the meeting of the Examining Committee has been conducted with all members digitally present. The chairperson of the doctoral thesis defence sends the doctoral thesis defence minutes, together with these statements, to the main registrar. Copies of the doctoral thesis defence minutes and the certifications are saved at the department.

Astri Muren and Elisabeth Wåghäll Nivre

Deputy Vice Presidents for Human Science